

Yellow Jack.

If the present yellow fever epidemic in New Orleans does nothing else, it will very likely furnish the opportunity for the scientists to further delve into the origin of the disease. Up to 1901 the scientific attitude toward the scourge was the same as its present position in relation to a number of other formidable teeth in Death's saw-edged scythe—a condition of baffled ignorance. In that year a physician in Havana proved that the germs of the disease were transmitted by a certain kind of a mosquito biting an infected person and afterward carrying the germs to some other person. Steps were at once taken, on this great discovery, to completely surrounding every fever patient and suspect with mosquito proof screens, with the result that since 1901 there has been no case of yellow fever in Havana, although for 200 years before that Havana had never had one summer wholly free of the plague.

Since 1901 investigation has been vigorously prosecuted in the light of the discovery. The United States government has sent out at least two commissions of scientists. The result is a weight of testimony in favor of the theory that the disease is transmitted only by mosquitoes, and one breed of day flies at that. Such is the belief of the discoverer of the fact of the mosquitoes' responsibility, and most of the physicians who know most of the dread disease. But despite this, there is a division of opinion among medical men, one class holding that yellow jack may be transmitted by other insects than the mosquito. It may be said, however, that by far the greater part of the medical fraternity whose opinion is worth while, by which I mean the minority that thinks, and not the great majority which neither reads or thinks, is convinced that the disease is imparted by inoculation and not by infection. Some authorities, however, believe that while the mosquito is the chief offender, the disease may be spread by infection.

This point is most important. It is the first principle, the place of beginning, the fact that is most important, because it deals with the origin. One of the greatest strides science has recently made is its recognition of the supreme importance of a knowledge of the origin of a disease as a means of coping with it. The origin often gives the key to the nature of the disease, and with this knowledge the remedy is generally the easier part.—St. Louis Censor.

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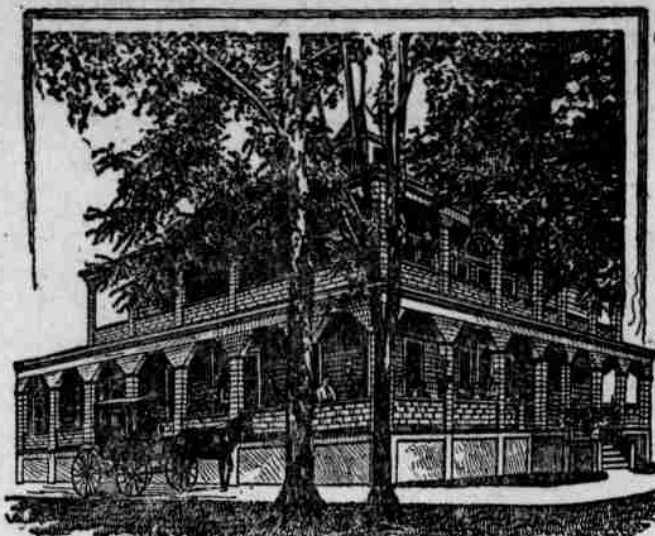
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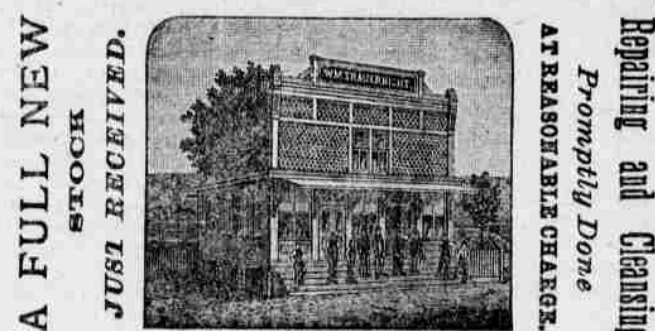
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